



Central Pacific Hurricane Center, Honolulu, HI

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Hurricane Preparedness Week: High Winds

During Hurricane Preparedness Week 2013 the Central Pacific Hurricane Center will share a series of statements regarding tropical cyclones and their various threats to the State of Hawaii. Today's topic: High winds.

The intensity of a hurricane is expressed in terms of categories that relate wind speeds and potential damage. According to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, a Category 1 hurricane has lighter winds compared to storms in higher categories. A Category 4 hurricane would have winds between 131 and 155 mph and, on the average, would usually be expected to cause 100 times the damage of the Category 1 storm.

Tropical storm-force winds are strong enough to be dangerous to those caught in them. For this reason, emergency managers plan on having their evacuations complete and their personnel sheltered before the onset of tropical storm-force winds, not hurricane-force winds. This means that you are on your own until the winds drop below tropical storm force.

Hurricane-force winds can easily destroy poorly constructed buildings. Debris such as signs, roofing material, and small items left outside become flying missiles in hurricanes. Extensive damage to trees, towers, water and underground utility lines (from uprooted trees), and fallen poles cause considerable disruption.

High-rise buildings are also vulnerable to hurricane-force winds, particularly at higher floors since wind speed tends to increase with height. Recent research suggests that you should stay below the tenth floor, but still above any floors at risk for flooding.

The strongest winds usually occur in the right side of the eyewall of the tropical cyclone. Wind speed usually decreases significantly within 12 hours after landfall.

Take action now to plan how to prepare your residence for strong tropical cyclone winds. More information can be found here courtesy the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College:

http://seagrantsoest.hawaii.edu/sites/seagrantsoest.hawaii.edu/files/publications/web_homeownershandbook_0.pdf



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